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The Institutions Are Collapsing

NATE BEAR
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The institutions are collapsing and the people are sick.

Ninety percent of people I know, from those in their 20s to those in their 70s,

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The people are sick because everyone has had covid on multiple occasions by n
And covid has trashed immune systems. Specifically, it supresses for months, sometimes even years, the T-cells that help us fight infections. This is no longe particularly controversial. Immunologists who argued about this at first are beginning to agree that yeah, something has changed. According to one group immunologists, covid represents 'a new disease paradigm' that will plague our societies for decades.

And it's not just me coming with anecdotes about sick friends and family. It's clear in every chart, in every graph. Whooping cough. Norovirus. Pneumonia. Sickness absence from schools. Long-term disability. All the numbers are up, u up.

This isn't a matter of opinion. This is a matter of fact.

But most people don't know about this because they haven't been told. People don't know because our media and political institutions told us covid had

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neoliberal individualism was transposed into public health to ensure the resumption of capitalist business-as-usual, as I explained here.

But covid isn't a cold (even if it can present as such) as I have written about befo It has different mechanisms of infection to the flu or common cold-causing rhinoviruses. It can do more damage to all bodily systems, including our immu systems, than rhinoviruses and flu viruses.

And, five years on, the damage it has done to immune systems is becoming evident. Viruses are hitting people more often and they are hitting them harder

People think it's 2019. They think they can't have covid in 2025 because "I've already had it/I've had the vaccine." They believe the propaganda. They still believe in old archetypes about the responsibility of the state to the citizen. The think the state protected them with vaccines and that this protection meant the could go back to normal.

But normal is over, gone, dead.

And it's never coming back.

Most of us have known a broad stability.

Call it privilege, call it the luxury of ignorance, but, for the most part, backgrou systems until recently largely functioned to maintain dependability, humming away, providing the foundation upon which lives are built.

That era is coming to a swift end.

For many people, privilege is still preventing them from seeing how our world i shifting.

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Public health is a frontline marker of this institutional breakdown, signalling tl collapse of the grand bargain between the leaders and the led.

But it's not just public health. The rot is embedded in all our primary institutio From the legal, to the political, from academic institutions to media institution

And it's not just in the US, where Trump is speed running the end of stability. I across the west.

The assault on international law is one of the most obvious cases of institutiona collapse. The genocide of Gaza has rendered international law, such as it was, r and void. This collapse has been engineered. It is a deliberate dismantling.

Legal rulings that compel states to detain individuals issued with international arrest warrants, like Netanyahu, have been ignored by the US and other westerı countries. Legal judgements labelling Israel's unceasing violence as a genocide have been ignored. Legal scholars have repeatedly stated that a generational ev underway in Gaza, yet the weapons keep flowing. And the state conducting this genocide has attacked and sanctioned the lawyers attempting to uphold the law all to a great wave of western silence.

The mask of respectability has been peeled back and our governments have sho their lawless, ultra violent faces.

If massive regional or global war breaks out between countries in the coming years, as looks increasingly likely, we can trace this directly back to Gaza and western support for systematic mass slaughter. Mass slaughter that stomped or the notion of human rights. That imploded the distinction between combatant and civilian. That demolished all of our claims to moral superiority over the bad guys. That collapsed the framework of international law.

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This demolition of human rights law hasn't just been confined to foreign policy Countries like the US and the UK are bringing this repressive, rights-stomping architecture home.

In recent months British journalists have been detained and had their homes raided for no other reason than condemning Israel and writing in support of Palestine. In the US, the repression of pro-Palestine voices that began under Biden has been forcefully ramped up under Trump, with the shameful illegal detention and attempted deportation of Mahmoud Khalil the most outrageous example.

This repression won't stop with non-American citizens. It is bound to come for American citizens in short order.

This repression isn't just a product of Trump or Biden or Starmer. It isn't just a product of the state. It is also coming from academic institutions, as servile university leaders cave to the Zionist agenda. Across America, universities have attempted to repress protests against genocide, have called in the police agains students, have allowed snipers to be positioned on university grounds against young people. University leaders have allowed their students to be shot and attacked with chemical weapons. Professors, including Jewish professors (in ca anyone still thinks any of this is about anti-semitism) have been fired for sharin social media posts in support of Palestine. Medical doctors have been suspende for speaking out against Israel. Universities, led by Columbia, are now expellin students and revoking degrees for the crime of standing against genocide.

This is all institutional collapse.

Professor Katherine Franke who was forced out of Columbia in January gave a

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> "The boards of trustees at elite universities," she said, "are no longer made u of people who are involved in education or committed to the educational mission. Instead they are hedge fund managers, venture capitalists, corporat lawyers and arms manufacturers who see their responsibility is to protect on the endowment fund. Columbia is the largest residential landlord in New Yo City. I describe the university as a real estate holding operation with a side hustle in classes. They are no longer interested in the role (universities) shou play in a democracy."

Franke says Columbia will never been the same again after Gaza, if it even survives at all.

And the media outlets people rely on for accurate information to understand th world have, when it comes to Gaza, twisted the information flows to suit the agenda of Israel and the west.

They have consistently attempted to both sides 'the conflict,' as they call it. At every turn they have manufactured consent for genocide with a variety of rhetorical slights-of-hand. From justifying every mass slaughter by parroting Israeli propaganda about 'targeting terrorists', to casting doubt on the death numbers by inserting 'Hamas-run' before every mention of the murder toll, to explicitly arguing for ethnic cleansing. To avoid saying the word genocide The Guardian this week called Israel's renewed campaign of mass murder "a war of extraordinary civilian casualties." This is cowardice and complicity.

Unable to present any balance whatsoever over Gaza, unable to alert people to t reality of forever covid, the media, too, must be seen as undergoing institutiona collapse.

The word itself invokes a sudden ceasing to exist. But in the context of institutions, it doesn't mean that. It means the way they operated previously, ar which we took for granted as being *generally in service to the people we expec them to be in service to,* is over.

We expect the media to be in service to the truth. We expect universities to be i service to education and their students. We expect public health to be in servic health. We expect politicians to be in service to the public. We expect that the l will be applied against bad guys.

This is over. And this is collapse.

But because these institutions still exist, because they remain embedded in our societies, we often can't see this collapse for what it is. And many people, witho access to alternative and critical points of view, are labouring under the false assumption that these institutions continue to be in service to the groups they expect them to service. But they're not. They're rotten, decaying husks of their previous, earlier selves. By no means have these institutions ever been perfect, by now they have been thoroughly corrupted by power, by neoliberal capitalism and by lobby interests.

But the nature of decay means that you can't hide it forever. And as these institutions continue to serve interests and agendas other than their stated one people will begin to notice. People are already noticing.

Support for Israel is plummeting. Increasingly few people trust mainstream nev sources. Trust in politicians is at an all-time low. Trust in public health leaders has slumped.

And as people begin to wonder who and what they can trust, they are finding

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corruption of liberal institutions, the turning away from their central missions, has created fissures all across society. And these fissures are being filled by far-right political and media figures, from Trump to Andrew Tate to Jordan Peterso to Tommy Robinson.

The job of pro-social people, then, as the collapse of institutions opens up these fissures and fuels fascism and breakdown, is to spot the gaps and provide inclu alternatives that can help build an anti-fascist future.

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I'm too old for this. The this being the evisceration of free speech.

When I was in high school, college students a few years older than me were demonstrating, occu college administration buildings, and getting shot by the National Guard to protest the involveme the United States armed forces in Vietnam.

These cohorts of mine now condemn legitimate, and in fact, righteous protest of the outrageous atrocity of Gaza and the West Bank. Will drafting their grandchildren to be the boots on the grour subjugate all of West Asia be the catalyst for protest finally being OK?

To see university presidents cower before Congress and to adhere to the dictates of war crimina the latest of a long list of American travesties.

Like Orwell, I will ever rue the abuse of language that prevails in our discourse. To call antisemiti who justifiably protest the mass murder of semitic people

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